Elie Wiesel and Isaac Bashevis Singer : The Meaning of Yiddish for Two Nobel Laureates

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Elie Wiesel and Isaac Bashevis Singer
── The Meaning of Yiddish for Two Nobel Laureates ──

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エリ・ヴィーゼルとアイザック・バシェヴィス・シンガー
── 二人のノーベル賞作家にとってのイディッシュ語の意味 ──

廣瀬　佳司

イディッシュ語作家としてアイザック・バシェヴィス・シンガーは広く知られているが、彼と同じようにノーベル賞作家として有名なエリ・ヴィーゼルが同じようにイディッシュ語を母語にしていることは、ほとんど知られていない。二人の作家は非常に似通った東欧のイディッシュ語社会で生まれ育ち、ユダヤ教の教育を受けているが、作家としての気質は大きく異なる。そんな二人の作家の文学を比較することでユダヤ人であることが文学にいかに深く関わるのかが見えてくる。宗教、迫害の歴史、伝承を通してシンガーとヴィーゼルの比較をすることで、ユダヤ系作家が抱く、記憶と伝統という概念を考察したい。

ヴィーゼルが著した『忘却』はホロコーストの歴史だけではなく、ユダヤ神秘主義の世界が描かれている。ヴィーゼルをイディッシュ語の視点から論じた文献はほとんどなく、彼の母語であったイディッシュ語に関して彼がどのような思いを抱いていたのかはほとんど論じられていない。シンガーと比較することで、ヴィーゼルのイディッシュ語への思いや哲学を明らかにしたい。

キーワード：イディッシュ語，ホロコースト，ユダヤの伝承，ハシディズム

I. Wiesel and the Holocaust

The theme of Elie Wiesel's novel, *The Forgotten* (1992) is the loss of memory, one of Wiesel's most important subject matters. He emphasizes the importance of remembrance as the essence of life:

> The opposite of memory is the sickness of forgetting, what today we call Alzheimer's disease. That is why I wrote a novel about it. I must tell you that it is one of the saddest stories I have written yet. I thoroughly studied this disease.

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> I have met with its victims and with their families. There is no escape from it. Anger can be creative. Anger can represent the beginning of growth. Alzheimer's, or forgetting, is the end.
>
> For these reasons my message is a very simple one: Never fight against memory. Even if it is painful, it will help you; it will give you something; it will enrich you. Ultimately, what would culture be without memory? What would be love for a friend without remembering that love the next day? One cannot live without it. One cannot exist without remembrance. (*Elie Wiesel: Conversations,* 150)

Elie Wiesel, a Holocaust survivor, seems to be bonded with and haunted by his memory of the Holocaust. However horrible the memory is, he tries to see it as one of the essential elements of his life. That is the reason why he wrote *Night*. It is his first and last memoir written in Yiddish under the title *Un di Velt hot Geshuvign* (*And the World Remained Silent*, 1956). His works are shadowed by an overwhelming fear of the past. In particular, his confessional-style novel, *The Forgotten*, revives his memory of the Holocaust and the Jewish hardship that lasted till the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. On one level, Wiesel is a writer about the Holocaust, a unique historic event. However, if we take a closer look at his work, we realize that his uniqueness lies not only in his delineation of the Holocaust but also in his faith in Jewish mysticism, or timeless Jewish tradition, as seen in his *Four Hasidic Masters* (1978). His mysticism is well expressed through his depiction of a particular vision—often his characters are mystified by ghost-like beings. No doubt, the milieu of his Hasidic childhood is closely related to his strong sense of mysticism. In his memoirs, he recounts his boyhood and confesses his fascination with Kabalism, "I really believed that a few prayers and Kabalistic formulas could halt the hangmen and save his victim."[1] *The Forgotten* is skillfully composed of two mutually exclusive elements: the Holocaust reality and the long Jewish tradition based on the eternal question of Jewish law, namely, faith in God and the *Shekhinah* (the Godhead).

Only through memories can the present and the past be bridged, and Yiddish for Wiesel plays an integral part in conjuring up the past of Holocaust victims, Jewish martyrs, and the glorified religious life of traditional Jews. Isaac Bashevis Singer also insists likewise in his *Nobel Lecture*:

> [Yiddish] was the tongue of martyrs and saints, of dreamers and Kabbalists—rich in humor and in memories that mankind may never forget. In a figurative way, Yiddish is the wise and humble language of us all, the idiom of frightened and hopeful humanity. (9)

As is clear here, Wiesel's nostalgic feeling toward Yiddish is very similar to that of Isaac Bashevis Singer, though Wiesel expresses uneasiness about Singer's work as

a result of their totally different philosophies of literature. I will examine their different philosophies of art later.

II. The Voyage to the Past

When Wiesel paid a visit to Hiroshima at the invitation of "The Future of Hope Conference" in 1995, he insisted:

> I do not like comparisons. Every tragedy is unique as is every person who suffers. Yet Hiroshima and Auschwitz are linked; I believe that had there been no Holocaust, no Auschwitz, there would have been no Hiroshima. Not that one was the result of the other; it is just that the senseless killing of millions of innocent people prepared our collective consciousness for ever more radical ways of "solving" problems of war. And yet, and yet, there is hope, there must be. (3)

Similarly, Dr. Timothy Snyder of Yale University argues the importance of memories of the Holocaust in his recent book *Black Earth: the Holocaust as History and Warning* (2015):

> The claim of a "right" to destroy the world in the name of profits for a few people reveals an important conceptual problem. Rights mean restraint. Each person is an end in himself or herself; the significance of a person is not exhausted by what someone else wants from him or her. Individuals have the right not to be defined as parts of a planetary conspiracy or a doomed race. [. . .] Understanding the Holocaust is our chance, perhaps our last one, to preserve humanity. (Snyder 340-41)

Elie Wiesel deals with the theme of crucial memories of the Holocaust and Judaism throughout the novel *The Forgotten*. Forty-year old Malkiel Rosenbaum, the protagonist, was born in Jerusalem in 1948 as a son of the partisan Elhanan and the radical Zionist Talia. Malkiel was born in a free Jewish state as a result of the Holocaust, and he was named after Elhanan's father, a victim of the Holocaust. He is the son of Elhanan, a Holocaust survivor who for over forty years has been suffering from his irreconcilable regret about his actions during the Holocaust. The older Elhanan becomes, the more blurred his memories become due to Alzheimer's disease. Out of compassion for his father, Malkiel cannot help but try to relieve Elhanan from the nightmare of his irrevocable sin of being a bystander and remaining silent while his friend committed a crime. This unpardonable wartime incident is kept undisclosed until the last part of the novel, because it functions as one of driving forces of this work. This covered-up incident compels Malkiel to go to the Romanian village where the crime that continues to haunt

his father was committed:

> I'm here to remember what my father has forgotten. But do I live only to remember? Suppose life were only your ancestors' imagination, or a dream of the dead? (Wiesel 12)

Clearly Malkiel has a strong filial attachment as well as a connection to the Jewish spiritual heritage. This compassionate inclination of the son makes it possible for Elhanan to confess his partisan[2] role during the war before his memory of it vanished.[3] Through Elhanan's narration we learn about his history and about the Jewish milieu in Romania. It sounds paradoxical, but he remains alone in an "iron box" of unspeakable regret even while speaking to his own son, Malkiel, who cannot fathom his father's firmly covered-up secrets of the past.

During the Holocaust, Itzik was Elhanan's best friend and they fought together as partisans until Itzik raped the young wife (Madame Elena Calinescue) of an anti-Semitic fascist because the fascist had murdered Jews. The rape is a form of revenge against the fascist. The fact that Elhanan could not save the victim from Itzik's violence haunts him, even though he offered her help after the incident. To trace his father's sin, which took place over 38 years ago, is the true objective of Malkiel's visit to Romania. In other words, the son tries to redeem his father by telling the truth to the raped woman and gaining her forgiveness.

> She (Madame Elena Calinescue) gazed at him for some time before murmuring, "Then will you allow an old woman to thank you? And to kiss you?" She kissed his forehead. (298)

In the final analysis, Malkiel's purpose is fulfilled by her words, "Thank you for coming . . . And thank your father" (298).

III. The Role of the Gravedigger

Malkiel's girlfriend Tamar, a political reporter at the *Times,* is a star. Malkiel falls in love with her. This love story between Malkiel and Tamar alleviates the heaviness of Wiesel's usual theme of the Holocaust. In fact, Wiesel's many novels deal with love and romance as well as with the Holocaust.

Tamar is a very intelligent and perceptive writer. She argues, "Some people aren't made for happiness" (43). Her remarks strike him as harsh, and it is perhaps because of this that he is attracted to her. He is not confident about his own fate because "his father's natural element was suffering and the memory of suffering" (44).

In contrast to his lack of confidence, Tamar's strength is demonstrated well by her words: "Happiness is a jealous God. He possesses you but won't let himself be possessed. We'll have to fight" (44).

In addition, her sense of humor saves him when Tamar visits his father. Elhanan possibly sees the resemblance between his lost wife and Tamar and praises her beauty. Tamar takes his compliments lightly by saying, "Now, don't tell me you want to marry me" (45).

Malkiel's negative view of life certainly owes much to his father, who is almost totally buried in the past. Thus the son cannot be as optimistic as Tamar, who has expressed her wish to have many children with Malkiel. His negative view of the world, however, prevents him from being excited at the prospect.

> "I don't promise anything." Children! By what right do we bring them into world? And what a world! Can we be sure they won't curse us for having given them life? "I knew a man," Malkiel said, "who didn't want children. Not because he didn't care for them, but because he loved them; he felt sorry for them. He thought of their future and said, 'Better let it come without them.' " (47)

Even with the help of Tamar's optimism, he seems unable to free himself from the burden of his father's pessimism. It is as if he felt doomed to relive his father's experience.

Malkiel has been brought up in a milieu in which his father's sense of sin inevitably overshadows the son. The father's anxieties are transmitted to the son. Elhanan's suffering from the haunting nightmare is due to his humanitarianism; he is an observant Jew and he has a deep compassion for other people.[4]

Elhanan takes his gradual loss of memory through Alzheimer's disease as a sign of God's punishment for his sin; he suggests to his son what happened to him:

> "I am a guilty man. That is why I am being punished. . . . I gazed when I should not have gazed and turned my eyes away when I should not have. I saw a sin committed . . . a crime. . . . I could have, I should have, done something, called out, shouted, struck a blow. . . . I forgot that we can never simply remain spectators, we have no right to stand aside, to keep silent, to let the victim fight the aggressor alone." (51)

Still not every secret is disclosed to Malkiel. Little by little, Elhanan's personal history just after the war becomes clearer through Elhanan's narration.

Elhanan's first and fateful encounter with Talia Oren, Malkiel's mother, was in 1946. At that time there were many centers in Germany where "displaced persons" waited for certificates to Palestine, and it was in one of these that Talia taught Zionist ideals. Strongly attracted by her passionate and fervent nature, Elhanan cannot resist her invitation to a Zionist meeting.

In the process of narrating the past, Elhanan skillfully leads his son to Elhanan's regrettable acts. However painful it may be, Jews feel compelled to remember for the sake of their Jewish identity. Memory plays an important role in giving Jews an identity.

In 1941, the Hungarian government expelled all Jews to Galicia as "foreigners" (102). Then the massacres started in Europe. During this period, the grandfather of Malkiel played an important role in the Jewish communities in Hungary. This memory of him should be passed on to the grandson, Malkiel. Through the journey from Israel to Hungary, Malkiel tries to trace his grandfather's story: having disobeyed the order of a SS officer, the grandfather was shot to death. From the old gravedigger, Hershel, Malkiel learns about his grandfather, who was well respected in the Jewish community. In fact, Hershel is the man who buried his grandfather.

In an episode about the gravedigger, Wiesel introduces a supernatural story, in which we can sense his tendency toward mysticism. According to the gravedigger, he himself was forgotten, even by the German soldiers, and left alive in the grave among the dead, while all the other people were deported to the death camps.

In reminiscing about the ghetto's last week, Hershel the gravedigger tells Malkiel of his spooky experience at the cemetery. One night he is held back by a voice from the grave. When indirectly rebuked for his rudeness in calling the gravedigger without any self-introduction, the ghost realizes that it "lacked manners, and introduced itself" (120).

> "I am Rabbi Zadok, the first rabbi to have the honor of serving this holy community; for three and a half centuries now I have watched over it from this grave." (120)

Wiesel never forgets to give his readers not only a sense of sadness but also a sense of humor, probably aiming at lightening the tragic Jewish situation during the Holocaust. The first rabbi, Rabbi Zadok, orders the gravedigger to bring an old cane from the last rabbi's house, and Hershel follows the order. In the end, Hershel is told to awaken the dead rabbis for the sake of the endangered Jews.

In order to hold a Jewish court, all illustrious dead rabbis are summoned from the grave by the order of the first rabbi. Investigating the city, the dead discover the unexpected situation in which the Jews have been put. In the hope of saving the Jews in the train on their way to death, the dead rabbis discuss ways of rescuing them, but in vain. Realizing that they cannot do anything for the living, they have to return to their eternal home at dawn.

It is not clear if this really happened or was conjured up by the gravedigger. The dream-like story is based on his memory. Nobody can examine the reality of his narration. Still, this part of the narration is well wrought to introduce an image of the mystical world of Judaism in East Europe during the war.

This mysterious gravedigger plays an important role in transmitting the history

of the Holocaust to Malkiel, who did not experience the tragedy. As Wiesel insists, the history of vanished shtetls (a little Jewish town) should be told and be passed on to the next generation.

Isaac Singer likewise refers to the role of creative writers (dreamers) as follows:

> Heaven and earth conspire that everything which has been, be rooted out and reduced to dust. Only the dreamers, who dream while awake, call back the shadows of the past and braid from unspun threads—unwoven nets. (Singer, "The Shadow of a Crib", 228)

It is clear that Wiesel and Singer have much in common in terms of a writer's responsibility to conjure up the vanished shtetls of Poland, Russia, and other East European countries during WWII, in other words, the Yiddish-speaking Jewish communities, through their literature.

IV. Yiddish of the Dead and the Modern Hebrew for the Armies.

Eastern European Jewry was, more or less, a religious community, in which Yiddish was widely used among the poor. Yiddish, thus, is a symbol of the weakness, poverty, and religiosity of Jews. Nowadays, to the contrary, Modern Hebrew has become the official language of Israel and carries its force.

Wiesel implies a symbolic meaning of Yiddish in his novel, *The Testament* (1981), dealing with a particular father-son relationship:

> [Yiddish] is a Jewish language. A language unlike any other, it tells of sorrows and joys unlike any others, it's a very rich language given to a very poor people. (38-9)

Wiesel does not make it clear, but he seems to include Modern Hebrew in "any others." Yiddish is Wiesel's *mameloshen* (mother tongue), and he explains its importance:

> It was in Yiddish that I spoke my first words and expressed my first fears. It is a bridge to my childhood years. As they used to say, God writes in Hebrew and listens in Yiddish.
>
> I need Yiddish to laugh and cry, to celebrate and express regret, to delve into my memories anew. Is there a better language for evoking the past, with all its horror? Without Yiddish the literature of the Holocaust would have no soul. I know that had I not written my first account in Yiddish, I would have written no others. To this day, perhaps more than before, Yiddish fills me with nostalgia.[5]

For Wiesel, Yiddish is not merely a means of communication; it also symbolizes his *neshome* (soul) filled with Jewish memories.

In addition, for Wiesel, Yiddish seems to be closely related to his sense of faith, as suggested in "God writes in Hebrew and listens in Yiddish." It goes without saying that "Hebrew" here is the Biblical Hebrew, not the Modern Hebrew employed in the new state of Israel. Zionists, like Talia and Itzik, gave up Yiddish after the Second World War and chose Hebrew as the official modern Israeli language. Regarding the distinction between Hebrew and Yiddish, Israel Zamir, Isaac Bashevis Singer's son, recalls an interesting episode involving Isaac Singer and Menachem Begin, the former Israeli prime minister:

> Begin told [Singer] that Yiddish would never be like Hebrew. It was impossible to give an order to a soldier in that language. How could you run an army in Yiddish? He asked. My father replied that Yiddish wasn't meant for running an army, Yiddish was a language of peace. (Zamir 185)

Considering these Zionistic ideas and the Israeli policies, Wiesel's declaration of love for the Yiddish language is a manifesto of his position as a pacifist Jewish writer. Malkiel, the pacifist protagonist in search of his father's memory, expresses Wiesel's attitude toward the glorious religious past. There is no trace of shame in it or in his attitude to the peace-loving, non-resisting, Yiddish-speaking Jews before the war.

V. Yiddish-Speaking Jews and their Faith

As seen in the aforementioned episode of the awakened dead rabbis in *The Forgotten*, Wiesel leaps from reality to fantasy and tries to erase the clear-cut distinction through manipulating narrative perspectives. In their ways of handling the mysterious and religious world, we can see some parallels between Wiesel and Isaac Bashevis Singer. Both writers are deeply rooted in the Hasidic tradition. In similar ways, they recreate the demolished Jewish community (*shtetl*) in Eastern Europe and Russia with love and longing for the past. However, when it comes to the manner of presentation, the writers are markedly different: Singer is not the kind of writer who idealizes the pre-War Jewish communities in Poland. Instead, he tries to recreate them as they were. Wiesel, on the contrary, has a tendency to emphasize only the religious side of old Jewish communities. Unlike Singer, Wiesel never writes about Jewish thieves or Jewish whores,[6] instead, he tries to conjure up a society of observant Jews, in particular, the Hasidic Jews. In his novel *The Gate of The Forest*, Wiesel writes about Baal Shem Tov, the founder of Hasidism.

> When the great Rabbi Israel Baal Shem-Tov saw misfortune threatening the Jews, it was his custom to go into a certain part of the forest to meditate. There he would light a fire, say a special prayer, and the miracle would be accomplished and the misfortune averted.[7]

In a similar way, Bashevis Singer also writes many beautiful children's stories firmly based on Jewish folklore and Judaism. Denying these aspects of Singer's literature, Wiesel does not refrain from one-sidedly criticizing Singer and his works:

> [Singer] painted a picture of Polish Jews as sex maniacs, of pious rabbis who dreamed of nothing but adultery on Yom Kippur eve. Yes, I know it is fiction, but still . . .[8]

Wiesel's criticism is not always correct with regard to many of Singer's children's stories, like *Why Noah Chose the Dove* (1973), *The Power of Light* (1980), *Reaches of Heaven—A Story of The Baal Shem Tov* (1980) and his autobiographical works, like *A Day of Pleasure* (1963) and *In My Father's Court* (1966). It is obvious that Yiddish writers[9], who envy Singer's success among non-Jewish people, have influenced Wiesel's evaluation of Singer.[10]

Wiesel's concept of literature is totally different from that of Bashevis Singer, as seen in Wiesel's response to an interviewer's question about the relationship between ethics and aesthetics in literature.

> Literature's task is to create an ethical awareness. Contemporary literature should not simply please or instruct the reader. On the contrary, it must scratch open the surface, lay bare the wounds and call us to self-reflection and introspection. This is the task of literature today. (*Elie Wiesel: Conversations,* 155)

Wiesel seems to try to confine the domain of literature to only ethical awareness by denying the elements of aesthetic and spiritual enjoyment. In contrast to Wiesel, Bashevis Singer argues in his *Nobel Lecture,*

> There is no paradise for bored readers and no excuse for tedious literature that does not intrigue the reader, uplift his spirit, give him the joy and the escape that true art always grants. (Singer 3)

There exist no Jewish robbers, pickpockets, pimps, or easily taken-in fools in the literary world of Wiesel. However, Wiesel does not hesitate to write about sexual love. Malkiel and Elhanan are good examples. Despite the fact that Bashevis Singer and

Elie Wiesel were born and raised in the same Eastern European Jewish culture, the recreated worlds portrayed in their novels are mutually exclusive. The idealistic picture of a *shtetl* is graphically presented in Wiesel's *The Testament* (1981) in a manner which characterizes his depiction of Yiddish-speaking religious Jews:

> I remember my childhood in Barassy. A Jewish home, on a small Jewish street in the Jewish quarter. If I may paraphrase our great poet Y. L. Peretz—in Barassy even the river spoke Yiddish; and the trees, month after month, preened themselves or lamented in Yiddish; the sun rose so as to send Jewish children to *heder*[11] and kabbalists to the ritual baths. Time flowed in harmony with the rhythms and seasons of the Torah. (45-46)

It is an almost pastoral landscape, described in terms of Judaism—a perfect harmony between religion and life. Even the four seasons are inseparably intertwined with Jewish High Holidays. This is the life of Yiddish-speaking Jews; in other words, Yiddish is a symbol of peaceful harmony among peace-loving people in a *shtetl*.

In all likelihood, the difference between Wiesel and Singer has to do with the Holocaust. In 1935, Singer escaped from Poland for America, but Wiesel suffered torture and saw hell in Auschwitz. As a result, Wiesel is acutely aware that he has the responsibility of transmitting his memory to those who are not familiar with the tragic fate of the observant, Yiddish-speaking Jews. By and large, Wiesel emphasizes the community. Singer, on the other hand, is more interested in describing a particular individual character, regardless of his experience of the Holocaust, than in highlighting the Holocaust itself. Dr. Itzik Gottesman of the University of Pennsylvania, argues:

> [Singer] was aware that he was not part of the tradition that emphasized the community. He had been criticized in the Yiddish world for this very reason—for placing character above the community. (Gottesman 165)

In other words, Singer is more motivated to create unique and universal human figures, deeply rooted in Jewish tradition but freed beyond its boundaries.

VI. Conclusion

Wiesel intends to transmit the Holocaust memory as a universal tragic history of humanity through his novel *The Forgotten*. This resounds with Prof. Snyder's remark, "Understanding the Holocaust is our chance, perhaps our last one, to preserve humanity."

Memory for Wiesel is also inseparably connected to Yiddish, the mother tongue of the author. Starting from mere nostalgia for Yiddish, Wiesel's thoughts

become deeper regarding the symbolic meaning of Yiddish. At the core of Wiesel's remembering, there are always pious, Yiddish-speaking Jews. Throughout his works, all fervent and disciplined ancestors in the past are Yiddish speakers. Wiesel firmly believes that Yiddish is unlike other languages. For him, it is the language of the peace-oriented and religious Eastern European Jews before the Holocaust, well described in Wiesel's idealization of his boyhood. This is the symbolic meaning of Yiddish for Wiesel: Yiddish is a symbol of the life of these traditional Jews and their fervent belief in God. In this way, for Wiesel Yiddish symbolizes the memory of a long Jewish religious life among the pre-war Eastern European Jewry. Similarly, Bashevis Singer comments on Yiddish, his *mameloshen*:

> [Yiddish] was the tongue of martyrs and saints, of dreamers and Kabbalists—rich in humor and in memories that mankind may never forget. (*Nobel Lecture 9*)

Elhanan's strong sense of guilt is regarded as a reflection of his own religiosity, and this tendency is successfully transmitted to his son Malkiel in the form of his father's haunting memory. Malkiel's voyage to the source of his father's memory leads Malkiel to the full recognition of his Jewish tradition and his own identity.

Living for decades in America enabled Wiesel to look at his fearful experience in Auschwitz from some distance. In other words, Wiesel himself sways between Elhanan, a Holocaust survivor, and Malkiel, a survivor's son with detached feelings regarding the Holocaust. Nevertheless, Wiesel's faith in God never sways. Wiesel's life and his belief in the possibility of world peace are firmly based on this unshakable belief in God:

> "I have never renounced my faith in God. I have risen against His justice, protested His silence and sometimes His absence, but my anger rises up within faith and not outside it."[12]

This belief can be seen in what Elhanan says to his son Malkiel at the end of the novel:

> If I am a Jew, I am a man. If I am not, I am nothing. A man like you, Malkiel, can love his people without hating others. I'll even say that it is because I love the Jewish people that I can summon the strength and the faith to love those who follow other traditions and invoke other beliefs. (315)

Foot Notes

1 Elie Wiesel. *All Rivers Run to the Sea* (New York: Schocken Books, 1995), 38.

2 Babi Yar is on the outskirts of Kiev. On September 29-30, 1941, 33,771 Jews were

machine-gunned there, according to an official German report. The carnage was performed by a special SS unit supported by Ukrainian militia. (Wigoder Vol. 4)

[3] A similar relation between father and son is seen in Wiesel's *The Fifth Son*.

[4] This might cause controversies among Jews regarding Israel and her aggressive policy against Arabs. In his memoirs, All Rivers Run to the Sea (1995), Wiesel admits:

> The fact is that in modern Israel acts of murder do occur. True, there are few such cases, but even one is too many. It seems we are finally becoming a people like any other, neither better nor worse. (Wiesel 298)

[5] *All Rivers Run to the Sea,* 292.

[6] See *The Symbolic Meaning of Yiddish*, Chapter 2, in particular.

[7] Elie Wiesel, *The Gate of The Forest,* i.

[8] Elie Wiesel, *And the Sea Is Never Full,* 351.

[9] "The day his Nobel Prize was announced was a day of mourning for many of them (Yiddishists). *And the Sea Is Never Full,* 351.

[10] See Chapter 7 of *The Symbolic Meaning of Yiddish*.

[11] *heder*: a traditional religious school.

[12] *All Rivers Run to the Sea*, 84.

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